

REMARKS

1. In response to the Office Action mailed December 13, 2004, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. Claims 1-22 were originally presented for examination. Claims 1-5, 8, 10-14 and 16-22 were rejected in the outstanding Office Action. Claims 6, 7, 9 and 15 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner stated that the claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. By the foregoing Amendments, claims 1-2, 4-7, 10-11, 14 and 16-22 have been amended. Claims 23-27 have been added, and claims 8, 9 and 15 canceled. Thus, upon entry of this paper, claims 1-7, 10-14 and 16-27 will be pending in this application. Of these twenty-four (24) claims, five (5) claims (claims 1, 14, 19, 23 and 27) are independent. Based on the above Amendments and following Remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the outstanding objections and rejections be reconsidered, and that they be withdrawn.

Art of Record

2. Applicants acknowledge receipt of form PTO-892 identifying additional references made of record by the Examiner.
3. Applicants acknowledge receipt of the form PTO-1449 filed by Applicants on June 26, 2003, which has been initialed by the Examiner indicating consideration of the references cited therein.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 6, 7, 9 and 15 are allowable. Applicants have made minor amendments to allowed claims 6 and 7. These amendments do not change the scope of the claims.

Claim Rejections

5. Independent claims 1, 14 and 19 and dependent claims 2-5, 8, 10-13, 16-18 and 20-22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No.

6,351,827 to Co, *et al.*(hereinafter, "Co"). Based on the above Amendments and following Remarks, Applicants respectfully request that these rejections be reconsidered, and that they be withdrawn.

6. With regard to independent claim 1, the Examiner stated that dependent claim 9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the limitations of dependent claim 9 along with the limitations of intervening dependent claim 8, and have canceled claims 8 and 9. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

7. With regard to independent claim 14, the Examiner stated that dependent claim 15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have amended claim 14 to incorporate the limitations of dependent claim 15. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent claim 14 is in condition for allowance.

8. With regard to independent claim 19, Applicants have also amended this claim to incorporate the limitations of claim 15. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent claim 19 is likewise in condition for allowance.

9. Applicants have also added new independent claim 23 and corresponding dependent claims 24-26. Independent claim 23 combines the limitations of original claim 1, and dependent claims 4 and 6. In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claim 6 was directed to allowable subject matter. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that new claims 23-26 are in condition for allowance.

10. Applicants have also added new claim 27, which is a system claim using means plus function language. Applicants respectfully submit that new claim 27 is allowable over the cited references for reasons similar to those discussed above.

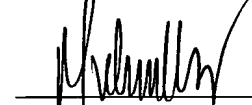
Dependent Claims

11. Applicants also assert that the dependent claims depend directly or indirectly from, and incorporate all of the subject matter of, their respective independent claims. Furthermore, these dependent claims add additional subject matter which makes them independently patentable over the art of record. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that the dependent claims are also patentable over the art of record.

Conclusion

12. In view of the foregoing, this application should be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael G. Verga', is written over a horizontal line.

Michael G. Verga
Reg. No. 39,410

March 14, 2005